



Arizona Gourds

July updates from the desert southwest...



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Welcome to the July issue of the Arizona Gourds newsletter!

June was a hot, busy month, both in Arizona and while I taught classes in California.

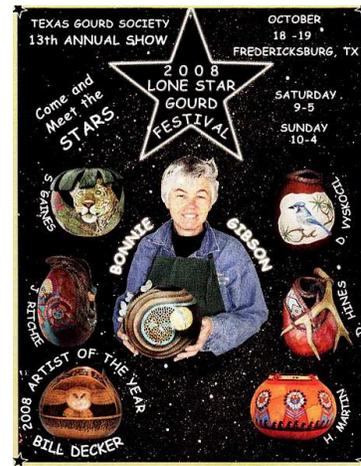
July will be pretty busy for me as well, but not with quite as many gourd related activities. I'm going to take some time for a family reunion in Minnesota (where hopefully it will be in the low 80's and with low humidity!) Because of that trip, **I will not be shipping orders from July 7th to July 21st.** I like to give everyone an advance notice so if you need tools or supplies you can order them before I leave. One of the advantages of being a small one person operation is that I can offer you fast shipping and excellent customer service. I'm hopeful this will make up for the occasional inconvenience when I am away.

Update: Gourd Classes

My Florida Gourd Seminar classes are now posted. These are special Pre-Retreat Power Carving workshops on September 17th and 18th, that I'll be conducting prior to the Florida Gourd Retreat. I'll also be teaching shorter classes at the weekend Retreat. Please visit the [Florida Gourd Society](#) page for more information and to register for classes.

My classes at the [Texas Gourd Festival](#) (October 17 - 19th) are now posted. Please visit their site to register.

*To get notice of classes as soon as they are posted, please add your name to my classes updates email list. People on this list will get the news first and have the best opportunity to select the dates and classes they prefer.



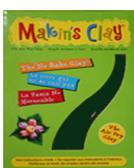
Gourd Trivia

This tidbit comes from Scott Nelson. I don't know if this is true or not, but it sure makes a good story!

It was common practice for the Native Americans to toss a bunch of gourds into a pond or lake where ducks or geese frequented. Once they got used to the gourds floating around, the Native American would place a gourd over his head, slip into the water, slowly swim out to the ducks/geese, grab their feet, pull them under water to drown, or twist their neck. He would attach the bird to his waist and keep "harvesting" birds until he had as many as he needed. Native American's also used "rafts" of grass, twigs, etc to catch ducks/geese the same way. The advantage to this method of hunting that the birds never caught onto (could that be where the term bird brain came from?) what was happening. This method not only insured that the birds would not be frightened away, but provided a reliable source of food until they left the area.

I rarely watch television, but one of the few shows I really enjoy is "How it's Made" on the Discovery Channel. When we travel, I always talk my husband into taking factory tours. We've hit everything from bottling companies, guitar factories, the Jelly Belly factory, the Kitchen Aide factory, Harley Davidson, distilleries and more! If you enjoy that sort of thing, you'll also enjoy visiting this video tour of the [Meadowbrook Gourd Farm](#), a company that has made gourds into a big business. I really enjoyed my mini factory tour. I know I wouldn't enjoy the mass production myself, but it's fun to see! (The only bad thing is the lack of safety precautions in the factory - I hope they have improved on this since the video was made.)

What's new on the [Arizona Gourds website?](#)



Back in Stock: Black Makin's Clay I sold out quickly last month, so I've ordered more and it is now available. Look for Makin's clay on the [Kits, Supplies and Displays page](#).

The **super tough carbide gourd cleaners** are also available again. They really do a slick job of cleaning out gourd pulp very quickly and efficiently. Look for them on the [Tools page](#).



The pointed filigree burs are now back in stock. You can order the Filigree Carving instructions and appropriate burs on the [Project Packets page](#). **Coming soon:** I've had some requests, and



will begin to carry the needle like carving burs that are shown in the filigree tutorial instructions. Look for an update on my home page to see when they are available.

Coming Soon:

New shipments of feathered cabochons, beaded pins, feathered strips, turquoise cabochons, tools and more.



Had to share this photo of my youngest student ever. Tyler is the nephew of Vickie Martinez, the hostess of a recent gourd class that I taught for the Fallbrook (California) Gourd Patch. He was a wonderful student and had fun too!

Coming next Month:

I ran out of space in this issue, but next month I hope to have a special expanded "Student Gallery" section. I'm saving photos that have already been sent, and I hope some of my recent students will also send me pictures of some of their completed projects. Please [email me](#) your photos !

Reader's Mailbag

Question: *Bonnie, I have been working with gourds full time since 1996. I am working with the smelliest gourd ever experienced and can't get rid of the stench. Do you have any secrets? I've even used Skunk deodorizer..I'd forget about it, but it's a huge gourd with a lot of work on it already. Hope you have a miracle solution, Liza*

Answer: I've heard about everything being used from fabreeze to baking soda to vanilla extract to soaking with salt water or water with borax. I haven't heard of any of them being totally successful. My gut feeling is that you need to seal off the gourd pulp - perhaps something like a polyurethane varnish, wood hardener or some other type of resin. That should seal the smell in. I guess just letting it sit outside for a long time would help but it might take a loooooong time. I will do some more research and will hopefully have a more complete answer for the next newsletter. How about it, readers? Do you have a solution? [Email me](#) with your ideas for solving this problem!

Special Feature: Welburn Gourd Festival

In June, I attended the Welburn Festival where I taught 5 days of classes and also had the privilege of serving as one of the judges for the California Gourd Society's Gourd Art Competition. Below are some photos of a few of the festival participants and a short interview with Daniel Montano, winner of the best of show award. *Note: Daniel is sending me photos of his Rattlesnake gourd that were taken during the carving process. Please save the link to the newsletter and check back later. I will post the photos on this page as soon as they arrive.*

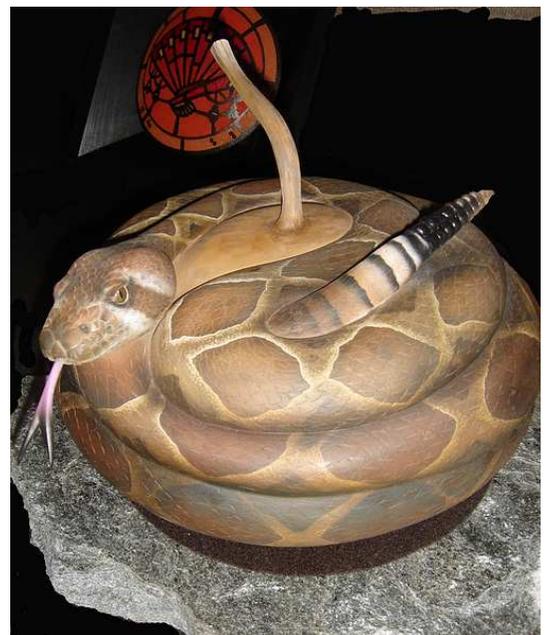
Artist Profile: Daniel Montano

Daniel Montano is a wonderful carver who has quickly created a stir on the California gourd scene. He has previously won their "Iron Gourd" competition, and last year took first place in the open category as well as best of division. This year he won several ribbons including a first place ribbon, best of division and best of show for his rattlesnake gourd. Surprisingly, his big win is only the 5th gourd he has ever done! His winning gourd has approximately 80-100 hours, and the snake body was carved from a solid canteen gourd, with carved wood pieces for the head and tail. (The tail also has a real rattlesnake rattle attached.) The sculpture is so realistically done that you are almost scared to get near it!

Daniel has been woodcarving for 20 years, starting when he was only 14 years old. He began carving as part of a Jr. High Industrial Arts class in National City, CA. This unique duck decoy carving class was taught by Arnie Erwin, who Daniel still values as his good friend and mentor.

Daniel uses a mixture of tools including a Foredom tool, Dremel tools and one of his favorites, the Xacto knife. He used an xacto knife to carve all the scales and other fine details on his winning sculpture.

You can contact Daniel at: gourdartbydaniel@hotmail.com





Marilyn Sunderland at her gourd booth.



Valentin Ruesga and Steven Browning in their "Browning House" booth.



Janene Propp shows off her gourd purse, gourd compact, gourd necklace and gourd earrings!

Random shots from the California Gourd Society Competition





July Feature: What are High Speed Air Carving Tools?



Detailing done with a High Speed Air Tool

Air Carving tools are small dental handpieces that operate at extremely high speeds. Most rotary tools operate at operate on high torque (power) and low revolutions (35,000-40,000 RPM) . On the other hand, high speed air driven tools operate at extremely high rotational speed, 350,000 to 450,000 RPM, but with very little torque. Slow speed handpieces use 1/8 inch diameter burs while ultra high speed instruments use 1/16 inch diameter dental burs. A regular rotary tool is excellent for bulk or gross reduction where detail and precision is not a consideration. For engraving or carving fine details, an air tool is ideal. Please note that these tools should not be confused with "micro-motor" type tools, which have small handpieces but are motor driven. These ultra high speed tools are driven by compressed air and operate at at least 10 times greater speed!

Ultra high speed handpieces have a light weight turbine with a very small diameter. Compressed air or gas can spin these turbines at very high speeds around 400,000 RPM. On the other hand, there is hardly any torque produced by these instruments, hence the ability to carve in extremely fine detail. The principal behind ultra high speed instruments is angular velocity, not torque. The advantage of these instruments lies in their phenomenal ability to precisely remove material, with almost no force or pressure. However, the tiny dental burs are not suitable for removing large bulk amounts of material, so an air tool should be considered an adjunct to your carving tools, not to replace them.

High speed air handpieces are operated by compressed air, and must be used in conjunction with a compressor of some type or with compressed CO2 gas. A large tank compressor may be used, but small portable tankless compressors will also work. Most compressors are noisy; it is often advantageous to place the compressor in one location and run a long air hose to the work area.

There are many different brands of air tools and a wide range of prices. The lower priced tools are designed for hobbyists that want to use the tool for light or occasional use. The [Turbocarver](#) and Powercrafter are examples of hobby level tools. The Turbocarver has a lightweight plastic body with **oilless** bearings (the "guts" of the turbine that drives the tool) and the Powercrafter has a larger metal body and bearings that requires the use of regular oil applications or an oil drip system.

Higher quality (and more expensive) tools are designed for those that want to use their tool routinely and give will it a hard workout. For the serious carver, a professional dental tool will provide many years of consistently smooth operation. Some examples of professional level tools are NSK or [Shofu](#) dental handpieces. These tools will cost more than the hobby level tools, but they are much more durable, and are suitable for full time or professional carving.



Shofu Handpiece

If you do make the investment in an air tool, don't limit yourself to gourd carving. I have used my own high speed air tools to carve a variety of materials including glass, ostrich eggs, turquoise, metal and wood. For the last few years, whenever I go to a wedding or birthday celebration I include a bottle of wine with an engraved name and date commemorating the event. It's fast and easy, and makes a wonderful gift.

***I am pleased to announce that in addition to the Turbo Carver, I am now offering the Shofu carving system on my website. For those that want a top quality tool at a very affordable price, the Shofu handpiece is a terrific value. You can see more details and a comparison of both systems on the new [High Speed Air Tools](#) page.**

Featured Instructional Videos of the Month:



[Remembering How To Drum](#)

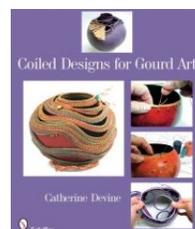


[Color Theory Made Really Easy](#)

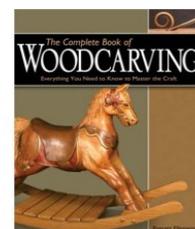


[Inlay Techniques](#)

Featured Books of the Month:



[Coiled Designs for](#)



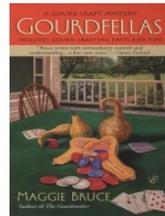
[The Complete Book](#)

We need access to more gourd videos! Visit the SmartFlix site and suggest your own favorites. If they get enough requests perhaps they will carry more gourd titles.

Click on the SmartFlix Logo to rent instructional Videos

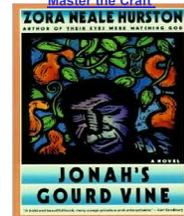
Great for those who don't learn as well from books!

Gourd Art
by Catherine Devine



GOURDFELLAS
(Fiction)

of Woodcarving:
Everything You Need to Know to Master the Craft



Jonah's Gourd Vine
(Fiction)

Featured Gourd of the Month:

Moose Tracks

This gourd was made as a commissioned piece for a moose collector! We worked out a swap for some antlers, hides, and other goodies I could use on future projects.



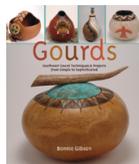
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Coiled Designs for Gourd Art is a new release from Catherine Devine, an award winning gourd artist and weaver. She has taught closed coil weaving for many years and has now authored a book that is devoted to coiling techniques on gourds. This book is due to be released on July 28th. If you pre-order now, you'll receive an extra discount and the book will ship as soon as it is available.

The Complete Book of Woodcarving is another new, pre-release offering. It should be an excellent reference for all styles of carving, including chip carving, power and hand carving, as well as tool selection and more.

Author Maggie Bruce writes mysteries that tie in with her own love of gourd crafting. A light, fun read.

Jonah's Gourd Vine was written in 1934 as the first novel of a black folklorist.



(Click on book cover for ordering information.)

**Be sure to visit all these different book pages shown at right to see some of the many other titles that are available. Click on each topic to see a variety of suggested books about each subject.*

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Gourds Southwest Gourd
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by Bonnie Gibson



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